

Security Information

7 March 1952

Handy file  
E Chemo  
file, made  
by ODCI/NS  
Sept. 1955  
file under  
"ONE"

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR/INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Consultation between the Board of National Estimates and certain members of the NSC Senior Staff

1. In line with our conversation of yesterday, would you arrange for the Board of National Estimates to meet with members of the NSC Senior Staff for the discussion of the problems of intelligence support for NSC policy formulation?

2. Some or all of the following subjects are of greatest concern to the Board.

- a. NIE's and SE's of high usefulness, of limited or no usefulness. (See attached list of papers done at the specific request of a Senior Staff member.)
  - (1) What makes for the usefulness of an estimate?
  - (2) What makes for the uselessness of an estimate?
  - (3) What could have been done to improve the usefulness of the most useful estimates?
  - (4) If an estimate was unsatisfactory largely because it had to be done in a hurry, is there any way of assuring the estimators of more time?
- b. "Estimative" language. Do the "estimative" words (almost certainly, probably, chances are even...) convey the varying degrees of probability and improbability that the drafters aim to convey?

3. How useful are estimates of other countries' probable reactions to possible US courses of action? Have the few estimates of this sort arrived in time to serve the formulation of policy?

This document has been approved for release through the HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Date 1/22/91  
HRP 89-2

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4. The value to the NSC of NIE's and SE's in which no agreement has been reached in the IAC on points of considerable importance.

5. The value to the NSC of estimates which have not been coordinated with the IAC agencies but represent merely O/NE-CIA views.

SHERMAN KENT  
Assistant Director  
National Estimates

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